

Family practitioners are a mainstay of the health care system of many small communities. Their services are highly sought after, and the competition among rural towns for their services is intense. Rural recruitment committees could improve their likelihood of success by increasing attention to the needs of both new practitioners and the medical community at home.

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SICK CHILD

I harvest December berries
From this small child,
Whose hands are the purple of my fingers
After picking August chokecherries.

Winter aspirations from her
Clogged lungs yield
Petri dishes of microscopic fruit,
Pseudomonas aeruginosa, spreading
Their wet bathing suit bacteria smell

Across the laboratory,
Down the hall where people
Not in white wrinkle noses
And ask "what's cooking?"
As if we practice alchemy,

Conjure spells and incantations
Over work benches.
They don't know it's a miracle
This sick child needs.

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